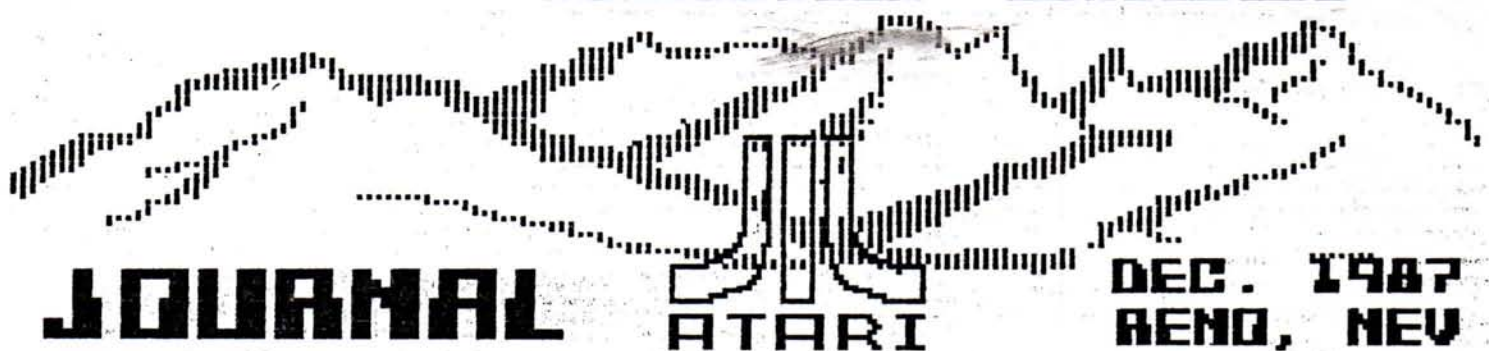


HIGH SIERRA USERS GROUP



ACTIVITY DIRECTORS...

CHUCK DALY.....Tel. 673-2149
MIKE O. MASSEY (ST SIG CHAIRMAN).....Tel. 472-3654
KENN JOHNSON (EDITOR).....Tel. 356-5907
MAYNARD SMITH (ST LIBRARIAN).....Tel. 916-583-4332

MEETINGS...

LOCATION & DATE: General meeting and ST Special Interest Group--Truckee Meadows Community College--Room 212; SAT. DEC. 19--10 A.M. & ST SIG--THU. DEC. 17--Round Table Pizza, Old Town Mall--7:00 pm

ANNUAL DUES...

ANNUAL DUES are \$15.00. If you see a warning dot or notice on your label, please renew your membership by sending your dues to: HISUG; P. O. BOX 2152; SPARKS, NV. 89432. High Sierra Users Group is an independent organization for Atari Computer users in the Reno area.

NOTE: If you want to see this group continue, to develop its fine program library and to publish this newsletter...THEN PAY YOUR DUES PROMPTLY...Don't take these services for granted. Your dues are our only source of income, and we can't continue without them. SEND YOUR DUES IN NOW!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

TO: HISUG; P.O. BOX 2152; SPARKS, NV. 89432

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY-STATE-ZIP.....

TELEPHONE.....

ARTICLES FOR THE JOURNAL...

Articles for the JOURNAL are always welcome. If you wish to submit them in printed form, please set your printer for a 3-1/2 inch wide column in condensed type face. However, as long as your copy is legible, even handwritten copy is O.K. Articles will be printed as space permits, and according to the editor's judgment of suitability. Letters to the Editor are also welcome. Please send material to: KENN JOHNSON; 1289 Highgate Court; Sparks, NV. 89431 by the tenth of the month for publication during that month.

BULLETIN BOARDS...

As a service to our members, we will be printing a list of bulletin boards as a standard feature in every issue of the Journal. This has been requested. The following list may or may not be up-to-date. If any of these need to be changed, please let me know.

FOR ATARI ST COMPUTERS:

- .. 520 ST SYSTEM--363-8111--24 Hrs.--Located in Las Vegas
- .. REBEL--453-0786--24 Hrs.
- .. COMPUTER WORLD--735-7264--24 Hrs.
- .. FALLOUT SHELTER--826-9633--24 Hrs.
- .. COLOSSUS--827-5857--5 pm to 8 am
- .. BENTLY'S CRYSTAL CASTLE--882-6248--24 Hrs.--1200 Baud Only
- .. COLUMBIA BBS--882-8325--10 pm to 6 am
- .. THE RENO CONNECTION (TRC)--972-4682--24 Hrs.--300, 1200, 2400 Baud

FOR ATARI 8-BIT COMPUTERS

- .. SIERRA EXPRESS--356-1418--24 Hrs.
- .. LAIDBACK BBS--786-9518--6 pm to 8 am
- .. SPEEDWAY BBS--577-2088--10 pm to 6 am
- .. R.A.S.S.--322-8866--24 Hrs.
- .. MAGIC MANSION--322-9338--24 Hrs.
- .. BEACH HOUSE--358-9554--24 Hrs.



.. ICE FACTORY--786-5596--24 Hrs.--300 Baud Only
.. FALLOUT SHELTER--826-9633--24 Hrs.
.. COLOSSUS--827-5857--5 pm to 8 am--300 Baud Only
.. T.O.T.L. BBS--852-6018--24 Hrs.
.. S.N.A.C.C. #2--876-8062--24 Hrs.
.. BENTLY'S CRYSTAL CASTLE--882-6428--24 Hrs.--1200 Baud Only
.. COLUMBIA BBS--882-8325--10 pm to 6 am
.. THE DUDE--885-0312--24 Hrs.
.. KONG'S PLACE--885-8090--24 Hrs.--300 Baud Only
.. RENO CONNECTION (TRC)--972-4682--24 Hrs.--300, 1200, 2400 Baud
.. SUN VALLEY BBS--972-6691--24 Hrs.--300 Baud Only

All the Bulletin Boards above accept both 300 and 1200 Baud, except as noted. The editor is relying on you modem users out there to report any needed corrections to this list.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS...

Although Kenn Johnson is taking over as editor of the Journal next month, this December issue is courtesy of your outgoing editor, Italo (Pete) Gavazzi. The main compensation for editing a newsletter is being able to sound off with your opinions in the columns. Over the past year, you've become all too familiar with my opinions via that route, so I won't take up more valuable space repeating them.

We are fortunate to have Kenn Johnson taking over as editor, and Harold Taylor has volunteered to give him an assist. I would like to express my gratitude to those who have helped me in my editorial duties--namely, Kenn Johnson, Chris Manson, and Syd Allen--and, last but not least, Chuck Daly, who has ably provided the mailing lists and exchange newsletters.

Our group receives a large number of exchange newsletters from other Atari groups every month, and these are a valuable source of material for your editor. I noted, in quite a few instances, that editors are constantly appealing to the members for articles. Fortunately, in my case, this wasn't a problem--thanks mainly to the help received from those people mentioned.

It appears that a good portion of the Atari group members, in other groups as well as ours, are eight-bit owners. Therefore, I believe that these members should make themselves heard and continue to be active. Many of the newsletters are strongly slanted toward the sixteen-bit machines, which is understandable--since that's where most of the action is.

As the editor of the ACE newsletter of Eugene, Oregon pointed out in their latest issue, the design of all the Atari computers--old and new--makes them superior to their competitors. They are good and durable machines. If

this were not the case, I wouldn't be content to remain fat, dumb, and happy with my 800 XL.

Being neither high-tech nor state of the art, I'm something of an anomaly as editor of a computer newsletter. Moreover, I'm of the generation who doesn't have any trouble spelling correctly and who thinks a "spelling checker" is a dictionary. No wonder you guys need a replacement.

Seriously, I've enjoyed my term as your editor. Although our newsletter is limited to five pages in size, that's enough space for plenty of news and opinion. Don't be reluctant to pass yours on to the new editor.

FREE MEMBERSHIPS...

This offer is made to those of our members who subscribe to the Antic Magazine Disk Edition, or to those who would like to subscribe. The current Antic Disk subscription price is \$79.95 per year. Antic Magazine is offering rebates to Atari Users Groups, if at least five of their members subscribe at one time before March 1, 1988. Even if your subscription runs beyond that date, new subscriptions will be "piggy-backed" onto your current subscription.

HISUG will pass on part of the rebate to you as a free yearly membership (value \$15.00). This is a chance for you to earn the group some money as well as a free membership for yourself, if you are an Antic Disk subscriber.

If this offer interests you, get in touch with Chuck Daly at 673-2419 before March 1, 1988.

B-GRAF vs SYNTREND...

If you have need for a program that will produce graphs from statistical data, both B-Graph and Syntrend for the Atari 8-bit computers will fill the bill for you. These are both available for under \$30.00, and are quite comparable. Some excerpts from a comparison review in C.A.F.E. Comments of Spring, Texas:

The statistical package in SynTrend is on a separate disk, and is much like a spreadsheet. It will do everything that you could ask for in statistics. SynTrend's way of displaying the data is much nicer. SynTrend is very easy to use. B/Graph's manual is difficult to read at times, but is much more detailed and has excellent tutorials...B/Graph has a better screen display...B/Graph does area graphs, something that SynTrend cannot do...SynTrend will read a DIF file regardless of how it was saved and does not need to wait time converting...The positioning of labels and percentages is better in SynTrend.

FoReM vs. BB/ST...

FoReM is a large TOS program, yet it should certainly be able to work on one double-sided disk drive if you needed to begin that way. Commnet told me it would, and their flyer doesn't say no, but the bugs cannot be overcome until you attach that second disk drive. Others agree.

FoReM is very powerful, with all the features of a complete system (see their flyer). It emphasizes sysop monitoring and control over everything a caller does; access and privileges can be set to many levels. E-Mail, F-Mail (files sent caller to caller), surveys, bulletins, message bases (SIGS), and so on, are all there. It seems adequately easy to move around the messages (much better than Michtron's BBS 2.0, I read). ST-Term can be used while the BBS is up. Disk operations are complete. Accounting is unusually detailed. XModem (w/CRC) and Kermit but not YModem. TOS programs can be run while online.

The menus are extensive, but not easy for callers to get into and out of. The sysop can alter the titles of the three most important ones, but not the commands. If a caller's access level is not high enough for a menu command, an unalterable message comes up: "No privilege for attempted access!" The creator of FoReM keeps adding on rather esoteric commands, but they are not in the menus, so the sysop needs to create tutorial bulletins in certain areas. Bulletin creation is abstract and takes some work at first. Overall the sysop has much to learn.

The three alterable menus and all bulletins and help files are ASCII text files, edited or created through any ASCII-able word processor. This means, however, that the column adaptation is not very good for callers with 40 column, and other odd-column, screens.

The program seems to have grown like topsy. In design it is somewhat disjointed--one thing does not lead easily to another and back again. The manual is rather like that, too, besides being abstract in such a way that it's hard to see the relationships between all parts of the BBS. A new manual came out right after I bought my version, so that may help the sysop to understand the program.

FoReM is best, I think, for sysops who feel the need to direct and manage their callers, or perhaps just enjoy this. It seems most appropriate for a BBS which addresses a varied audience, some of whom are mischief-makers, and is in a large city with many people at toll-free distance. I have labeled it a Piscean product. \$59.95 direct from Commnet.

BB/ST, by Quantum Microsystems Inc, is Aquarian. There are about 101 commands, and the sysop easily creates any and all menus (except the sysop menu) with these, or a combination of them by linking (macros). Command letters, titles and privilege assignments are all designed by the sysop for each menu. Menu commands and titles can be completely hidden from those without that privilege---no need for the finger shaking "no privilege for attempted access!" To the initial caller the BBS may seem too simple, yet is actually of great power, if so designed. The prompt system and getting around is much more caller (and sysop) friendly, no matter how you design the menus.

All menus and bulletins and other text shown to callers is generated from within a text editor. Because of this, all are able to adapt, with very neat formatting, to any screen size up to 500 cols width(!).

The message system is of "infinite tree" design. Any message can be the start of a new subject (the "parent" of many "children") so subjects can be refined to any degree. New subjects automatically create SIG areas and other bases, and they can even be blocked off by setting their privilege flags to a location on the 32 space flag line; accepted callers will have their flags set to the same space. Moving around the "tree" takes a little getting used to, but the message menus can be made more detailed, or a tutorial written. Files may be attached to messages on the tree. E-Mail is entirely separate.

File upload and download is controlled by security levels. There are three commands for arc'd files. XModem (w/CRC) and YModem are both supported (not Kermit). File descriptions cannot be as long as in FoReM. Accounting is more elementary. There are complete disk operations, and a simple terminal program. TOS programs can be run.

There is a 26 command mini-language geared to the expansion of the BBS in almost any direction. It is carefully explained, with many examples. Together with a TOS relational database, such as COBSense, it could develop incredible power, if your programming is up to that.

The manual is very well written and interesting---nicely laser printed. Both program and manual reveal a very compact, integrated BBS program, and I can testify that it is a delight to configure, expand, and work with. Even if you do not go beyond reconfiguring the sample program provided, you will have a fine all 'round BBS. Also a TOS program, it is \$49.95 direct from QMI.

I have noted the announcement, in Oct 87 *ST Informer*, of BBS Express! ST, from the Atari 8-bit world. It appears to me a better alternative to BB/ST than FoReM. What's it like, 8-bitters? [Same issue of *ST Informer*: best ever spreadsheet eval; likes A-CALC PRIME] [Syd Allen]

HISUG NEWS

The November meeting was my last as ST Chairman. I am going to take over the editor's position starting next month, but I will continue to support the evening meetings. Replacing me is Mike O'Massey. Mike is a true computer hobbyist and will help the group continue to grow.

At the next evening meeting Mike will have demo's to showoff the power of the ST. Mike purchased one of the original Magic Sac Macintosh emulators and has since become well versed in it's use. He also recently purchased PC-DITTO, the MS-DOS software emulator. Having had a IMB PC Jr, he is also knowledgeable of messy-dos. He is bringing along his hard disk and will show how to use both emulators with it. It looks to be an interesting meeting.

At the suggestion of Maynard Smith, our ST Librarian, I have put together a disk that will serve as an introduction to the ST and HISUG to new purchasers. I will preview it at the evening meeting and will be open to suggestions for improvement and distribution.

HISUG MEETINGS

THURSDAY DECEMBER 17 7:00pm
Round Table Pizza - Old Town Mall

SATURDAY DECEMBER 19 10:00am
Truckee Meadows Community College
Room 212

RAMBLIN'

Kenn Johnson

RAMBLE (ram'b'l) To write or talk aimlessly or without sequence of ideas.

Desktop publishing is definitely in vogue. Some of the software houses who have announced their versions include MIGRAPH, GFA, TIMEWORKS, and ISD's CALAMUS. Along with FLEETSTREET all will be trying to topple the king - PUBLISHING PARTNER. When all the hype and smoke clears, I feel that only one or two will survive. I pick PUBLISHING PARTNER as a survivor for these reasons.

1: It was the first by almost a year so a good user base is already developed.

2: It has matured through updates where it is a relatively solid product. It has been a long time since I've seen a crash.

3: A more mature version is in beta and is being shown already.

4: Product support is undeniably top of the line. Have a problem or need a special print driver? All you need do is give them a call.

Other survivors? Well how about MIGRAPH? They also have a good user base to build on with their EZ DRAW program and again because of good product support. Of course GFA has a big following with it's PASCAL BASIC and Timeworks has a base with it's overpriced, mediocre, WORDWRITER ST. CALAMUS is a high end program selling for \$349 obviously aimed at business.

Then again, a new word processor from NEOTRON could do them all in. WORDUP is definitely a contender and to take some words from Jack T. supplies "Power without the Price." And then again 'then again', it has been announced and they have displayed some demos, and

it hasn't been released. Maybe it's another product that will take two years from announcement to see daylight.

Speaking of two years, MICROSOFT WRITE is supposed to be released this month (November). I wonder if so much development time will make a good product!

WORD PERFECT announced immediately after release of their program, an update to correct numerous bugs. Many are obscure and probably won't be found by users until they learn the program, but leaving the READEME file off the learn disk!

Last month I took a cheap shot at MEGAMAX for announcing an upgrade last spring with no delivery yet. Well shut my mouth around my foot! No sooner had I delivered the newsletter to the editor when I received a note to send in my disks because version 2 is shipping the end of November. Well my disks are gone and will let you know what LASER C looks like soon. It is advertised in the winter issue of STart and certainly sounds impressive. It has always been one of the best C development systems and now it looks to be the very best. Time will tell.

SUPRA is showing a 20MB internal hard disk for the MEGA. Suggested list is \$599. A 40MB drive may follow if they can solve the power consumption problem with the MEGA's power supply.

While ordering floppy disks from my source, she informed me that because of the Dollars to Yen plunge, disk prices are increasing by %20 after the first of the year. Bulk disks are getting scarce with no availability schedules. It could be awhile before things improve, so it may be time to stock up. She also mentioned that manufacturers may drop single sided disks completely making only the double sided variety.

ATARI is finally releasing the SLM804 Laser Printer, but at \$1995 I don't think it has a chance. As I mentioned before, even at \$1599 it missed it's market by taking to long to arrive after announcement. Point-GENICOM has released a ASCII laser printer for under \$1000 and prices of HP lasers are now advertised less than \$1700. These are complete systems, not a ram empty add-on. Speed is the Atari's only redeeming feature. Again time will tell if I'm right or just making wind. I personally will have to wait until Jack Klugman is pushing CANON laser printers in pink, blue, or red for \$399 before I can have one.

Now the CD ROM sounds more like a good deal. In a couple of years my daughter will have GROLIERS ENCYCLOPEDIA at her finger tips instead of taking up my valuable bookshelf space. I believe that the CD will make a significant impact on the computer market, much more than the MEGA or the laser.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

PROGRAMMING the ST

Kenn Johnson

You've had your ST for a while now and the decision has been made to start programming in 'C'. The easy part is through, for now you have to figure out whose compiler to purchase. Then you have to learn how to use it and of course, learn the language, and let's not forget GEM. Maybe some of my experiences can save you some time, money, and grief.

Whose compiler should you buy? Spend some money and buy a complete package. You can get the developers package (DRI ALCYON) from ATARI. It has everything you need except decent documentation. It's also the most obscure to work with. MARK WILLIAMS C is almost as complete. You will need to buy a resource editor as it is not included. METACOMCO has a new version out that that uses the K-RESOURCE editor. Unfortunately it does not work with the new ROMs. Finally we have MEGAMAX C. It is the easiest to use, compiles the fastest and almost consistently makes the smallest code. It also has the slowest double precision math of the three (fixed in the next revision). That's it! Stay away from the others available. They are incomplete packages and one of them produces huge amounts of code.

Now that you have picked your compiler you have to learn 'C'. From my huge collection of books on the language I'll pick a few that are worth spending money on.

The C Primer -- Hancock & Krieger
C the Complete Reference -- Schildt
C Programming Guide -- Purdum

Now you have your compiler and books but you find it almost impossible to do any programming. Well the ST uses something we are all familiar with - GEM. This makes things a little more difficult, but a couple of years have passed since the ST's introduction, so your life is easier than mine was. A new book is out that is ST specific and could be the definitive book on GEM. It's a must have. Get it!!

ATARI ST Application Programming - Pollack & Weber

Magazines should be another source. Note an emphasis on should. Almost every magazine for the ST has a column on 'C' but only ST LOG is teaching it. ANTIC has had several programming examples that are very good. Unfortunately the programmer has defined all the controls so that the source code resembles a cross of BASIC and PASCAL. Once you have removed all the redefines, you can get to the code so you can study it. ST APPLICATIONS has a column called LET'S C. Save your money on this one unless you are interested in a monthly rehash comparing MARK WILLIAMS and MEGAMAX. The author shows few programming examples. START and COMPUTE's ST do not have regular articles but include lot's of source on disk to study.

So what should the beginner do? These are my recommendations (just remember that it is only an opinion). MEGAMAX for it's quick turn around and ease of use, the 'C' PRIMER, ATARI ST Application Programming, and copies of Clayton Walnum's articles from ST LOG. It's a package that should have you writing useful programs in the least amount of time.

Programming in 'C' is a big jump from BASIC, but once you've felt the power, there's no going back.



"What? My ATARI is a game machine? Sacrilege! Blasphemy! I mean (sputter - sputter), why I bought my computer as a serious business system." Bull!

Even though the ATARI ST is very capable of doing anything the IBM or Mac can do and usually better, the one thing it does best is gaming. I did not buy my ST to run spreadsheets or databases, why shucks, I don't even know the difference. It was bought strictly as a tool of enjoyment and what better enjoyment than games. I have several commercial games but some of my favorites are in the public domain.

The library has many types of games to satisfy most tastes from simple to complex, from mundane to exciting. In the next couple of issues I will discuss some of what's available. I enjoy card games, so we will start there.

FAST POKER - This was created by two members of the FASTER users group of Canada and is a very well done simulation of a video poker machine. There are three files required to play the game.

POKER.PR
CARD1.PIC
CARD2.PIC

Once you have the game up and running the first thing you need to do is set your bankroll. There are two ways to do this, press both mouse buttons simultaneously for \$100.00 or using the left and right cursor keys to run it up or down. Next select your bet by pointing your cursor on one of the payback columns and press the left mouse button. Bets go from \$1 to \$5, left to right. Now you are set to play. Press the right mouse button to deal and select your discards with the left button.

The effects on the screen are very well done. The program is a little slow recognizing your commands at times, but it is very busy doing other things. My only complaint is that the cards change position on the redeal if a new card is of higher order than what is showing.

SOLITAIRE - Written by David Addison, these are two very well implemented solitary games. Though I am not a personal fan of GFA BASIC, I do recognize it's power and these games will demonstrate it. There are also three files to be concerned with:

GFABASRO.PR
KLONDIKE.BAS
CANFIELD.BAS

The first is the GFA public domain run time program. It is needed to run the actual games. So, knowing that, select and run it. When the file select window opens pick the solitary game you wish to play. Instructions are included within each game. They are beatable but it's tough.

These games are very well done graphically but do seem to have some quirks. The more games you play the more crazy the deal. I know that doesn't make much sense but it's the best I know how to describe it. You will know what I mean when you see four eights and the first four cards off the crib are nines. I suspect a problem with the random generator. Also in KLONDIKE the Ace of Spades is always in the same spot. I just quit the program and re-run it. I enjoy solitary and have never tired of it.



HISUG
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HAVE A NICE DAY

HIGH SIERRA

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